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FOUR BOOKS ON THE SYNOPTIC PROBLEM

1. *Das Marcusevangelium und seine Quellen.* Von R. A. Hoffmann. Königsberg i. Pr.: Thomas & Oppermann, 1904. ix + 644 pages. M. 16.
2. *Das Evangelium Matthaei übersetzt und erklärt.* Von J. Wellhausen. Berlin: Reimer, 1904. 152 pages. M. 4.
3. *Principles of Literary Criticism and the Synoptic Problem.* By Ernest DeWitt Burton. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1904. 72 pages. \$1.
4. *The Diatessaron of Tatian and the Synoptic Problem.* By A. Augustus Hobson. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1904. 81 pages. \$0.50.

In Herr Hoffmann's exhaustive study of the triple tradition we have a theory of the relationship of the gospels which presents some new features. The author starts from the numerous differences of expression in parallel accounts, which serve only to convey the same meaning. These, as he thinks, must be due to translation. He postulates, therefore, an Aramaic Mark which was used by the editor of the first gospel (=Matthew) and translated by him. Meanwhile the Aramaic gospel had been re-edited and enlarged by an Aramaic editor. This longer Aramaic recension was used by the editors of our second and third gospels (=Mark, Luke). In each case translation implied more than a mere literal rendering of the Aramaic into Greek, and included considerable editorial revision. The shorter Aramaic gospel is symbolized as U_1 , the longer as U_2 . One startling feature of this theory, as elaborated by the author, is that Matthew in general has an earlier and more original narrative than Mark. Matthew's order, for example, in chaps. 8-12 is that of U_1 . U_2 had altered the order, and Mark and Luke have followed him. In the incidents in which Matthew has a shorter narrative than that of Mark, Matthew's longer form is secondary and due to expansion of U_1 in U_2 . Sections in Mark which do not occur in Matthew are for the most part due to interpolation by the editor of U_2 . In such details as *οἱ δὲ ἄνθρωποι* (Matt. 8:27), the two demoniacs (8:28), the two blind men (20:30), the immediate cursing of the fig tree (chap. 21), the mother of the sons of Zebedee (20:20), "Why askest thou me about the good" (19:17), Matthew is primary, representing faithfully U_1 , while Mark's account is secondary, being based upon U_2 , in which U_2 has been modified.

Of course, a theory like this has much in its favor. It will explain so many features of the gospels. If Matthew diverges from Mark, he is following the original Aramaic Mark. If Matthew and Mark agree, they both translate the same Aramaic. If Matthew and Luke agree against Mark, they independently use the same word to translate their Aramaic original, as in *ἡδυνήθησαν* (Matt. 17:16; Luke 9:40), against *ἰσχυσαν*

(Mark 9:18), or Mark has deviated from the Aramaic, as in the omission of *διστραμμένη* in the next verse. Herr Hoffmann works patiently through Mark and its parallels very much on the method of B. Weiss, endeavoring to show that the phenomena of the triple tradition are explicable on the theory presupposed by him. It is a defect in his method that he so rarely attempts to reconstruct the Aramaic original of which he everywhere finds signs of translation. Of course, much can be explained on his theory, though we cannot but think that the arguments by which he tries to justify the priority of Matthew's text to Mark's (which this theory often involves) are strained and precarious. Judged as a whole, the Markan text seems to us generally more original. But the weakest point in the system is its failure to account for verbal agreement in two or in all three gospels. Herr Hoffmann has much to say on the divergences, but what explanation can he give of the agreements? It is true that he occasionally notices the more striking ones with a view to explaining them away. In Mark 8:2, e. g., he reads *ἡμέρας τρισίν* and omits *μοί*, at the same time omitting *ἦδη* from the parallel in Matthew. But, not to speak of a long list of rare or unusual words, such as *ἐρημία*, *σφυρίς*, *ψυχίον*, *εὐκοπώτερος*, *δύσκολος*, *ἐπίβλημα*,¹ there are everywhere found exact agreements in Greek phraseology which no theory of independent translation can adequately explain. There is much to be said in favor of an original Aramaic Mark,² but the Mark which lay before our first evangelist must have been a Greek translation practically identical with our second gospel and with the Mark used by Luke. Otherwise, in spite of all divergences, their verbal agreement is entirely unaccountable.

We feel ourselves, therefore, on surer ground when we turn to Wellhausen's interesting commentary. This consists of a translation, followed by a series of notes which turn chiefly on the relationship between the three gospels, upon critical and grammatical points, and upon traces of an Aramaic stage of tradition behind the gospels. There is no introduction, but the author assumes that Matthew has used Mark and also other sources. Those sections which are common to Matthew and Luke are denoted Q. This does not mean that they all came from a single source; but some of them have a fixed sequence and betray literary connection. These are given as Q*. The following may serve to give some example of Wellhausen's treatment of the gospel. The phrase "kingdom of the heavens" is literary and secondary. Christ spoke of "God" and the "kingdom of

¹ See Sir John Hawkins, *Horae Synopticae*, pp. 42 ff.

² So recently Pfleiderer, *Urchristentum*, Vol. I, pp. 400 f. Zimmermann, *Markus-evangelium*, p. 148.

God" as did the Galilean peasants. Chap. 5:4 is an interpolation from Ps. 37:11, and there are seven, not eight, beatitudes; cf. the seven parables of chap. 13 and the seven woes in chap. 23. Luke's text in the beatitudes is primary. Matthew has moralized them. In 6:4, the second ἐν τῷ κρυπτῷ is the object of βλέπων. We must translate "who sees what is secret," "der auf das Verborgene den Blick richtet." In 6:27 ἡλικία is "height." "Es gibt Riesen unter den Exegeten, welche den Wunsch grösser zu sein, als man ist, unbegreiflich finden." In 9:16 πλήρωμα is an Aramaism. The verb occurs in Syriac with the meaning "to patch," and there is a derivative="tailor." Chap. 10:16-42 is compiled by Matthew from various sources. In 10:31 πολλῶν is due to mistaken translation. It should be translated "much," and be connected with "better"; of 6:26; 12:12. The "wisdom" of 11:19 is the divine wisdom; her children are the Jews. Ἀπό represents an Aramaic preposition="against." Wisdom is justified against the Jews, since their complaints against her are seen to be querulous and contentious. In 12:41, 42 we have words which originally had nothing to do with the Sign of Jonas. Chap. 12:40 is to be preferred to Luke 11:30. Luke has omitted the reference to the fish intentionally. "Rise up in judgment with" in vss. 41, 42 can be understood only through retranslation into Aramaic, where it means "impeach," "indict."

In 21:29, 30 the right order is first the obedient, then the disobedient son. The Jews in vs. 31 say ὁ ὑστερος, purposely giving a wrong answer. The first words of Christ's reply are an expression of indignation at their perversity. On 23:35 we have a longer note than usual. The Zachariah of 2 Chron. 24:20, 21 cannot be meant. He was a son of Jehoiada, was perhaps an invention of the Chronicles, was anyhow quite an obscure man, was not slain "between temple and altar," and occurs too early in the history to form a culminating point. The Zacharias of Josephus³ suits admirably. "It is ludicrous that commentators who do not object to the equation Barachias=Jehoiada should suddenly develop scruples to the equation Barachias=Bariscæus. They have no ground for preferring the Zachariah of Chronicles to the Zacharias of Josephus, but only a motive." Chaps. 22:7 and 23:38 presuppose the destruction of Jerusalem; so may the reference to Zacharias. The learned commentator seems to us here not to give due consideration to the prominent place occupied by the Zachariah of Chronicles in the Jewish tradition.⁴ Chap. 17:24-27 was

³ *Bellum*, IV, 335.

⁴ B. Sanhedrin, 96b; Gittin, 57b; J. Taanith, 69a. See Merx. *Die vier Evangelien*, Vol. II, Part 1, p. 334.

written before the fall of Jerusalem. Chap. 16:17 is not necessarily late. The latest redaction of the gospel need not be later than 100 A. D.

While the two books noticed above deal with special aspects of the synoptic problem, the two following treat it as a whole, but from different points of view. For some years the efforts made to analyze the gospels into sources have seemed unable to advance beyond the position arrived at by B. Weiss and Holtzmann, that Mark and the Logia form the two main sources. Recently attempts have been made in several quarters to supplement this by the supposition that Luke used also a special source (sometimes parallel with the Logia), to which he gave the preference over his two other sources. In the meantime protests have been raised from time to time against the whole "Logia" part of the two-document theory. Every attempt to construct a Logia document by putting together sections common to Matthew and Luke has failed, because it remained inexplicable why these two writers should have used such a document so differently and with such freedom. The theory of a special source for Luke in addition to the Logia seems only to complicate matters without explaining very much. Moreover, the use of the term "Logia" for the Greek document thus discovered as a source for Matthew and Luke seemed arbitrary. Papias speaks of a Hebrew or Aramaic writing. This common source of Matthew and Luke, if it existed, must have been Greek. And why did the name Matthew pass from it to the first gospel and not to the third?

Professor Burton's work seems to us to be extremely valuable as advancing the whole question to a further stage. He lays down the principles which govern the literary relationship between documents, and applies them to the three gospels. This leads him, after careful consideration of alternatives, to the result that Matthew and Luke are derived from Mark and from another literary source, which, however, must have been, not a single document, but two or more documents. Turning now to the gospels themselves, the writer in a most original and independent manner analyzes the non-Markan sections of Matthew and Luke, as follows: (1) There are in Matthew's six long discourses some 160 verses without parallel in Mark or Luke. Adding to these some 70 sayings peculiar to this gospel in its shorter discourses, we obtain about 230 verses not reported in the other gospels, and constituting a little over one-fifth of the whole gospel. These passages constituted a source for Matthew, and were probably taken from the Matthean Logia. Thus an explanation is found for the name Matthew as applied to the first gospel. (2) Luke 9:51—18:14; 19:1—28 was another source used by Matthew and Luke. It contained in common with Mark an arrival at Jericho which explains its position

in the third gospel. Matthew has borrowed from it sayings which he has interwoven into other sections in his gospel. (3) Matthew and Luke both used also a Galilean document represented for us by Luke 3:7-15, 17, 18; 4:2b-13, 16-30; 5:1-11; 6:20-49; 7:1-8:3, and the parallels in Matthew, Mark, and Luke both had other sources for the narratives peculiar to them.

It is not possible here to give any impression of the systematic way in which the writer works up to these conclusions. He is careful to give reasons which make it improbable that any two of the main sources mentioned above, or of the minor sources, were only parts of one document. The last eighteen pages of the book are occupied by a most useful table exhibiting the parallelisms of the gospel.

We shall not attempt to criticise the theories here sketched. The strongest and most original part of the thesis is the treatment of the "Logia" question. There is much to be said for a view which limits this document to sayings and confines its use to Matthew. The weakest point is perhaps the theory that Luke's Perean section formed a common source. If so, Matthew has omitted a good deal from it (unless he had a shorter revision of it) and in other ways has treated it with great freedom. Professor Burton thinks that it had no indication of the precise period to which the events belonged. Does this mean that Luke has given it a unity which it would otherwise lack by inserting the allusions to a journey to Jerusalem? If so, is it not more probable that he is compiling disconnected narratives from many sources (oral and written)? The document is in any case rather an amorphous one, and, without the geographical link, is difficult to understand as a separate work. It seems easier to suppose that Luke should have drawn together scattered narratives, and given them a literary connection, even though he thus made a rather shapeless section in his gospel, than it is to think of this loose collection of narratives as having a separate literary existence. It should be added that Professor Burton admits that the agreements of Matthew and Luke are an "unexplained remainder," but many scholars will assent to his statement that they owe their origin "to causes that belong to the border line between editorial revision and scribal corruption, or else to some slight influence of one of these gospels in its final form on the mind of the writer of the other."

This book may be recommended to students as the most weighty contribution to the critical analysis of the gospels that has recently appeared and as one which marks a distinct advance in the treatment of the whole subject.

We have not left ourselves much space for Mr. Hobson's interesting contribution to the synoptic problem. He lays down the principles to be

followed before the text of the Diatessaron can be used for critical purposes. "The Arabic version is the basis. The other documents are to be used as corroborative or as checks." "Tatian followed no gospel constantly as his primary source." He then shows that Tatian in his rearrangement of the gospels made displacements of order, added and omitted clauses, conflated sentences, and rewrote clauses. Consequently his work presents incongruities and repetitions, and furnishes "examples of almost every sort of phenomena which are generally alleged to be present in works supposed to be compilations." He thinks that this should serve, on the one hand, to counterbalance objections to documentary hypotheses of the origin of the gospels as insufficient to account for the phenomena which they present, and, on the other, to corroborate the documentary theory, in so far as a complete similarity between Tatian's method and that of the synoptists can be shown to exist. Defenders of the "oral" theory would do well to study Mr. Hobson's moderately stated refutation of *a priori* objections to a documentary origin of our gospels.

W. C. ALLEN.

EXETER COLLEGE,
Oxford.

SOME RECENT WORKS ON THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

It is certainly a matter of interest that, while the strife of opinions continues concerning the authorship and character of the fourth gospel, the Christian world ceaselessly draws strength and inspiration from its pages, as though no question were to be raised regarding them. Whatever positions sober and reverent critical study may ultimately reach, the church will not part with that delineation of Jesus given us here. His teachings as here set forth will ever be of supreme importance and worth. No one who has felt their power can believe them to be simply human creations. Of the three books estimated in this article, two make critical questions entirely subordinate, and the third uses them simply to show that the descriptions of the prologue come to us from the Old Testament rather than from Hellenism. One book is from a Roman Catholic scholar in France; another, from the critical atmosphere of Germany; while the third reflects the study of a devout American scholar, who, while well acquainted with the critical discussions about the gospel, accepts without hesitation its Johannine authorship and its full historicity.

L'abbé Fouard's "St. John and the End of the Apostolic Age"¹ is the

¹ *Saint Jean et la fin de l'âge apostolique*. Par C. Fouard. Paris: Lecoffre, 1904. 343 pages. Fr. 7.50.